Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Bulletin

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https://tasfieldnats.org.au

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we study natural history.

Miena Jewel Beetle survey at Liawenee

Sunday 5th February 2023

Castiarina insculpta, is commonly known as the Liawenee Jewel Beetle, Miena Jewel Beetle, or Great Lake Jewel Beetle. The emergence of adult *C. insculpta* occurs with the flowering of *Ozothamnus hookeri*, a head-high shrub that belongs to the daisy family - and there have been regular annual TFNC excursions timed to coincide with this event.

Castiarina insculpta on *Ozothamnus hookeri*
Photo: Eddie Gall

The 2023 jewel beetle survey got off to a good start when a few members make a brief stop at Liawenee on their way to Woolnorth – finding a few *C. insculpta* before the arrival of the main group of seven members who met at Bothwell for a cup of coffee on the way to Liawenee.

Castiarina virginea on *Ozothamnus hookeri*
Photo: Eddie Gall

One of the first finds for the main group was *Castiarina virginea*, another jewel beetle with similar colouration and a different colour pattern to *C. insculpta*. As temperatures warmed, insects became more active. Soldier beetles, *Chauliognathus triclor*, seemed to aggregate around particular *O. hookeri* bushes. On yellow flowered *Xerochrysum subundulatum* and *Leptorhynchos sp.*, there were pintail beetles, clerid beetles and satin-green forester moths. An interesting *Campion* sp. was found on the grass. It is a member of the lacewing family and, due to its similarity to a preying mantis, is commonly called a mantis fly.

Liawenee *Campion sp* (lacewing)
Photo: Eddie Gall

Field Nats at the Vale of Belvoir
Photo: Anna McEldowney

In all, six *C. insculpta* were found, including a mating pair.

On the route back to Hobart, the group visited Camerons Lagoon, finding a further six *C. virginea*, but no further *C. insculpta*.

Eddie Gall

Vale of Belvoir outing 11 -12 February 2023

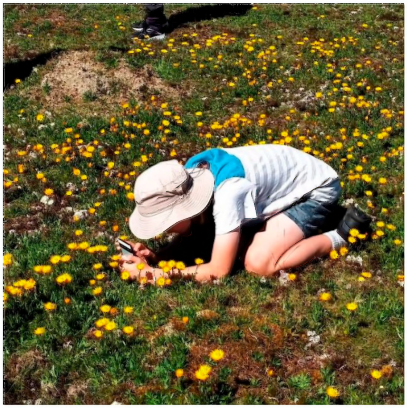
This weekend had its origins at the Easter camp 2022 after we had visited the TLC property at the Vale of Belvoir, 5 kms from the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre. Sib and Keith Corbett suggested we might like to visit their family property to the east of the TLC property and document its natural history. The vegetation had previously been surveyed and a plant list prepared by Sib, and Keith supplied us with a map of the main vegetation types and the tracks through the property. The visit took place over two days.

Excursion to Vale of Belvior - Part 1: Moss Magic

11th February 2023

The Vale of Belvoir is one of the places I have always wanted to visit. This special weekend of discovery was assisted by the generous invitation from the Corbett family to stay at their nearby property for the two-day excursion.

As 29 of us pulled into the red soil of the country, the flowering trigger plants (*Stylidium graminifolium*), yellow paper daisies (*Xerochrysum subundulatum*), and Mountain Rocket (*Bellendena montana)* waved us down to our feet. Squeals of delight and flicking camera lenses all added to a showing of glorious Nature. The property has 14 different vegetation communities and is owned by John Corbett and his family.



A carpet of yellow paper daisies (*Xerochrysum subundulatum*)
Photo Lynne Maher

Frequent visitors are John's parents Sib and Keith Corbett who led the excursion around numerous tracks. They generously shared their knowledge of the area's botany and geology.

Banjo and Jasper immediately set off to build a cubby amongst the young Cider gums (*Eucalyptus gunnii*) making it clear this was a place they frequently explored over their young lifetimes. White bleached skeletons lying heavily on the gentle moss had their origins explained to us all – herbivores and omnivores with their differential teeth order to help them digest their specific diets.

First stop was a magnificent *Poa* and sedge grassland circling the side of a long glacial moraine heading eastward from Lake Lea. The area feeds two water catchments – one draining into the Vale River and westward to the Pieman River and the Fall River flowing eastward to reach the Bass Strait via the Forth River.

After a long time on our knees as field naturalists are wont to do, we slowly made our way into the mature myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) rainforest with occasional alpine yellow gums (*Eucalyptus subcrenulata*). With a rare warm day, the forest was a welcome relief. It was open underneath and easy to walk through. A feature was the covering of the forest floor, trunks, and lower branches by a wide variety of mosses and lichens.

Winding our way down through the forest we entered to the east a large stand of mature melaleuca forest underset by a feature of the whole trip – a moss filled garden of watered by the rains and deep peat soils on limestone.

It was here that I noticed the surgeon-like fingers of PhD student Pippi, who, after many years away in Canada was relearning the names of every plant she could...pinchering away at their little stalks and biological structures until identified. Pippi was here to learn the geology from Keith and will continue her research over the next two summers, documenting the grasslands surrounding each of more than 40 sinkholes. Pippi explained that this type of grassland sinkhole is very rare in the world, and that it is a biological hotspot for noting climate change.

The softness of the mosses and the shade of the trees, the knowledge of Keith and Sib, made for a day I shall never forget, and I feel all of us felt the same magic.

Karen Dedenczuk

Excursion to Vale of Belvior - Part 2: Lake Lea

February 12th, 2023

What a difference a day makes! Compared to the warm cloudless day before, the Sunday was cold and windy with misty rain and several participants moved on to warmer places.

Field Nats at Lake Lea
Photo: Anna McEldowney

The plan was to go to the end of the Lake Lea Road and explore the area around the lake. South of the lake are some shallow sinkholes (the area has a limestone substrate) which contain species of plants which the local wildlife obviously find very tasty as there was a lot of evidence of macropod and wombat congregations and the plants were well browsed.

Continuing on to Lake Lea we passed through an extensive area of low growing and heavily browsed *Grevillea australis.*

At the lake there was a large amount of *Isoetes gunnii* washed up on the shore – it is a native quillwort and can be found growing in alpine/subalpine lakes in most parts of Tasmania where it is often dislodged from shallow water by strong winds. Some of the group headed back to the vehicles while others walked west around the shore of the lake, leaving the invertebrate experts searching the floor of the sheltered rainforest for specimens. The wind eventually dropped making for pleasant walking conditions through to the north side of the lake. Interesting plant finds were *Utricularia dichotoma*, *Baekea gunniana* in full flower and an area

of *Baloskion australe* (Restionacae) on the western edge of the lake. Sabine found a clump of *Ramalina inflata* or Tree Top lichen – a rare find as it isn't often seen, growing as it does on the tops of trees!

Ramalina inflata (tree top lichen)
Photo: Anna McEldowney

After lunch we continued further around the lake, eventually being able to see, on the eastern side, the bright coloured coats of John and family who were circumnavigating the lake.

Sib and Lynne continued on to the river outlet at the north of the lake while the rest of us returned to the cars where Geoff had just seen a large tiger snake lured out by the warming day.

Stackhousia pulvinaris
Photo: Anna McEldowney

On the way out some of us stopped at a deep sheltered sinkhole where the rare *Stackhousia pulvinaris* was thriving and flowering.

Amanda found a handsome fly nectar feeding on *Leptospermum* which she identified as *Pelecorhynchus nigripennis* – a red-ruffed Pelecorhynchid from the Superfamily Tabanidae. Of 42 ALA records there are only 6 for Tasmania. It is not listed as a species in the Field Guide to Insects of Tasmania - others are but not this one.

Pelecorhynchus nigripennis
Photo: Amanda Thomson

Our special thanks to Keith and Sib for sharing their expertise and this wonderful place with us and to John and family who so generously hosted our visit to their property on the Saturday and allowed some of our group to camp overnight.

Anna McEldowney

More Jewel Beetles from Liawenee

The return trip from the Vale of Belvoir turned up another jewel bettle - *Castiarina macquillani* - found on *Ozothamnus hookeri* by Amanda at Liawenee while looking for the Miena jewel beetle.

C. macquillani, according to Jewel Beetles of Tasmania, had been recorded previously at Mt Algonkian in western Tasmania but we believe it has also been found at Ben Lomond. This specimen had green

undersides, not blue as described in Jewel Beetles of Tasmania.

Anna McEldowney

Castiarina macquillani (jewel beetle)
Photo: Anna McEldowney

Big Bend Trail Excursion

Saturday 4th March 2023

kunanyi Mt Wellington is known as being windy and wet but it was cool, calm fog that greeted the March excursion. We met at the car park above the Big Bend Trail and walked down the road to the start of the track.

The trail had been recently resurfaced so it was easier than many may have remembered from previous excursions. As we started out, the sun broke through the fog, and it warmed into a very pleasant day.

Field Nats at Big Bend
Photo: Ruth Gall-Bucher

The track goes in a westerly direction around the northern side of Thark Ridge and descends to the broad saddle to Mt Connection. Initially there is snow gum (*Eucalyptus coccifera*) woodland with a heathy understory and, as altitude is lost, the woodland becomes a mix of snow gums and urn gums (*Eucalyptus urnigera*).

Pentachondra involucrata
Photo: Lynne Maher

The autumn warmth meant lizards, insects and spiders were active. As we walked down the track, dark, coloured metallic skinks (*Niveoscincus metallicus*) scurried into their homes under the rocks. The mountain guitar plant (*Lomatia polymorpha*) was flowering, and, in the sun, they were fragrant and a good insect attractant. One highlight of the day was four separate findings of the jewel beetle *Castiarina wilsoni* and a *Castiarina jubata* feeding on the flowers. Another highlight was the variety of small jumping spiders, some in the sticks and low bushes on the side of the trail and some hopping around on the trail. There were *Jotus spp, Prostheclina spp*, and an *Opisthoncus nigrofemoratus*. The most beautiful of the jumping spiders was the peacock spider with the blue patterned abdomen, *Maratus harrisi*.

While some progressed as far as the start of the track up to Tom Thumb, some ate lunch by a track side waterhole. They were serenaded by the songs of crescent honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*), yellow throated honeyeaters (*Nesoptilotis flavicollis*) and golden whistlers (*Pachycephala pectoralis*). They heard the calls of two species of frog and there

appeared to be three species of tadpole in the waterhole.

Castiarina wilsoni
Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

More about the species found on the excursion can be found on iNaturalist https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/tas-field-nats-2023-mar-big-bend-track.

Eddie Gall

Maratus harrisi
Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

Excursion Report: Ida Bay

Saturday, 15th April 2023

Despite worries about a lack of decent coffee outlets on the drive south (unfounded, fortunately!), fourteen members of TFNC assembled at the old Ida Bay railway station on Sat 15 April. The railway has been out of service for a few years now due to concerns over crumbling infrastructure and it seems unlikely that it will resume operations. There is a fire from the terminus to the old homestead location at Donnelly's Gate trail that runs parallel with the rail line and provides flat, easy access to the various habitat types along the way.

Field Nats at Ida Bay
Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

Starting with open heathland and button grass, everyone got busy looking for their particular organisms of interest, whether it was snails, fungi, birds or invertebrates. After a few hundred metres, the track heads slightly downhill into stringybark forest before emerging at the old homestead site, which is cleared and full of numerous exotic weeds. As usual on a field nats' walk, the pace was leisurely as we all admired and photographed the fungi, plants and animals.

Russula persanguinea
Photo: Eddie Gall

Fungi were particularly abundant along the track including webcaps, coral fungi and some spectacular fly agarics. Although it was relatively cool there were still various flies, wasps, moths, spiders and beetles for the dedicated observer. Quite a few birds were seen and heard, including spotted pardalotes, pink robins and crescent honeyeaters. Lunch was taken in the clearing of the old homestead, but the large number of mosquitos meant that most people ate swiftly and moved on.

Unusual colour form of *Arkys alticephala*
Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

Some people headed back after lunch while a smaller group headed off down the old railway to the bush graveyard and a view of the waters of Ida Bay itself. A few waterbirds – black swans, silver gulls and great cormorants were present. Then it was time to return, although Clare and Eddie stopped to perform a bit of weeding, removing a patch of foxgloves. The weather held out just long enough for us to get back to the cars, a few drops of rain appearing right at the end – perfect timing!

Altogether 168 observations of 106 species have been recorded so far on the iNaturalist project (https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/tas-field-nats-2023-apr-ida-bay) – any further additions are most welcome…

Keith Martin-Smith

Bush graveyard and Ida Bay
Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

Another honour for Genevieve!

On 10th February Genevieve Gates was inducted into the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women 2023 for service to: "Education and Training; Environment; Science and Research". This honour follows on from Genevieve being awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion in 2022 and the nomination was supported by her colleagues in research, teaching and communication in the world of mycology.

Genevieve Gates
Photo: Eddie Gall

It was an occasion where women were recognised for their outstanding contributions to, and impact on many areas of Tasmanian life through community service, education and volunteer work. It was inspiring to hear their stories and we were pleased to be there with David Ratkowsky to see Genevieve receive her award, and to see a Tasmanian scientist being acknowledged for her impact on the global study of mycology.

Dr Genevieve Gates
Expert mycologist
Teaches mycology internationally
Co-authored A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi
Australian Natural History Medallist 2022

Genevieve Gates – inducted to the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women
Photo: Anna McEldowney

If you know of anyone, or a group of women, who should be included on the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women go to www.women.tas.gov.au and consider nominating them for inclusion in the next round of awards which open in 2024!

Anna McEldowney and Annabel Carle

President's address:

40 Winters in Tasmania's Mountains

Eddie Gall delivered the 2023 President's address to the AGM of 2nd March 2023.

Eddie started by reminding us of the 1960's, 70's and 80's when people such as Olegas Truchanas, Peter Dombrovskis, Tony Moscal, and many from the different walking clubs produced public slide shows of Tasmania's wilderness areas.

Their aim was to showcase the beauty of Tasmania's wild areas that were relatively unknown at the time, particularly Lake Pedder, the Gordon River and the Franklin River. The slide nights took place in town halls, community halls and club meetings throughout Tasmania … and without doubt, at meetings of TFNC. The slides would be set to stirring music. Having engaged the audience, the presenter would then talk about the need to save these areas. They had quite an impact in developing the conservation movement.

The shows used professional slide show equipment, with reel-to-reel tapes for the audio systems and they usually had two synchronised 35mm slide projectors taking turns to project onto the screen without the harsh transitions of using a single projector.

Black currawong – enjoying (enduring) a Tasmanian winter!
Photo: Eddie Gall

40 Winters in Tasmania's Mountains recreated these slide shows showcasing some of Eddie's spectacular wilderness photographs. The presentation had three parts, based on 3 pieces of music. The first one was of mountains of southern Tasmania. The second was of kunanyi Mt Wellington. The final part was of Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair and the Walls of Jerusalem.

Mt Gould
Photo: Eddie Gall

The president noted a big change in the nature of winter. Many of the photos of deep skiing snow were taken until about the mid 1990's. Since then, climate change has had a big impact. It's not just that heavy snowfalls are less frequent … It's also that cold fronts are more likely to have rain rather than snow, and rain simply washes snow away. Consequently, many of the more recent photos showed drifts of snow and frozen tarns.

It was a very enjoyable presentation packed with Eddie's wonderful photos. See the back pages of the Bulletin for a few more selections from the President's address.

Speakers

Thursday, 2nd February 2023

Dr Magali Wright is the leader of the Orchid Conservation Program of the Landscape Recovery Foundation. She presented "Orchid Conservation in Tasmania". Many of Tasmania's threatened plants are orchids and with their obligate mycorrhizal relationship with fungi, are some of the most challenging species to propagate.

Thursday, 13th April 2023

Dr Jemina Stuart-Smith presented *Safeguarding Red Handfish from Extinction*. *Thymichthys politus* is an endemic marine species considered to be on the edge of extinction. With a wild population of about 100 adults, conservation strategies are needed to bolster the wild population.

From the Librarian: - Our Library - What now?

Members will know that since COVID we have had difficulty in accessing our Library which is still stranded in the Life Sciences building whilst our meetings are held in the UTAS Law seminar room. We are not allowed to move the library cupboard to the Law building.

Your committee has discussed this dilemma a number of times in the last two years.

When Kevin Bonham was Librarian, he analysed our library book borrowings from 2013-2019 (pre Covid) when it was found the library was only averaging 1.7 loans/meeting. The most common subjects borrowed were higher plants (19%), birds (12%) insect (10%) and geology/caves (10%) and down it went to mosses/liverworts/lichens, mammals & marine inverts (all at 5%) and fungi/slime moulds (4%). Since Covid and the inaccessibility of the library, borrowings have inevitably been near to zero.

Interestingly to our knowledge, there has only been one query about 'what was happening about the library?' since.

With that advent of so many apps and other on-line resources most identifications are now being done on line via 'iNaturalist', 'UTAS dicot key,' 'Field Guide to the Insects of Tasmania' web page, the 'Flips' and subject dedicated Facebook pages etc.

There of course many other books in our library which are more general in nature and not 'ID related.' For your reference, our current book catalogue is up to date and may be accessed on our website at https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/library/

The Committee is therefore considering a) is our library still needed in this era? and b) if we disband our library what should we do with the books in it?

We have made preliminary enquiries to both the UTAS Morris Miller Library and the Tasmanian State Library and provided them with a copy of our current book catalogue. Both have declined the offer of our library books. Their respective replies were 'no room' and 'we already have a copy of these books.'

This is your opportunity to have your say! We are inviting **all our members** (and not just those who attend General meetings) **to comment on this proposal to disband the library. There are two steps to this:**

1. **Please what is your opinion about this proposal? Pros/Cons welcomed**
   Please email: librarian@tasfieldnats.org.au

2. **If you agree then please**
   Are there suggestions of how we disperse the books?
   - Do we donate to schools etc?
   - Sell to members/Give away to members?
   - Offer to 'Cracked and Spineless' or 'Astrolabe' etc.?

ALL REPLIES TO BE RECEIVED BY April 23rd, please.

This proposal is still in the consultation phase and a motion to disband our library still has not been voted on by your committee. If the committee motion is passed, this proposal would still need to be taken to a General Meeting for final formal approval before we would proceed.

Annabel Carle (TFNC Librarian)

Club news

Discontinuation of speaker write up.

Members will know that the bulletin features a write up of the monthly speakers, for those who were not able to attend the meeting. We decided to discontinue doing this, and instead list the speakers name and talk title.

Kevin Bonham life membership

The committee approved Kevin becoming a life member which he has accepted, and the proposal will be taken to the May General Meeting for member approval. Subject to that approval, it will be presented to Kevin at the June meeting.

Kevin has been on the TFNC committee continuously from 1988 to 2022 - a total of 34 years! He was President for 9 years, Vice President for 17 years, Librarian for 3 years and general committee member for 5 years.

Excursion write ups

To date, the majority of excursion reports that you read in the Bulletin have been written by committee members. Reports from other members (and photos) are very welcome to diversify the voices and lighten the load for committee. Committee members are happy to help new contributors who would like to make their writing debut and the members who have already provided reports are encouraged to continue – we've had some great contributions from members who aren't on the committee, and it would be lovely to see them continue with more reports. If you attend one of our excursions and feel like you could venture an excursion report, please let Eddie know. Similarly, if you have any interesting or spectacular excursion photos – they can be submitted directly the editor independently of the reports. Please make sure they are labelled and the photographer's name is provided.

Changes to the TFNC committee:

We welcome back Kristi Ellingsen to the role of Vice President, a role she last held in 2014. And we also welcome new member Fiona Walsh as general committee member. We look forward to their new ideas and contribution to the committee. There were also a few changes in positions - Amanda Thomson has handed over 'Walks and Talks' to Keith Martin-Smith and will take on the Secretary role, Lynne Mahler will be the new Treasurer and Annabel Carle takes on the librarian position from Keven Bonham.

Easter excursion 2024

The committee discussed potentials for the 2024 Easter excursion. Several areas were discussed, including Ben Lomond, Smithton, Gowrie Park, Poatina, Tarraleah, Blue Tiers, Mount Cameron, Lake Dobson and Corrina. We are looking for a place with a nice walk and suitable accommodation, such as a motel. Please let us know if you have any areas for the Easter camp.

Other Clubs Newsletters and Links to other Useful Sites on our website!

Just a reminder to check our LINKs tab on our website at https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/links/

This page has a list of links to various **Tasmanian Flora and Fauna Sites, including:**

- Papers and Proceedings of the Tasmanian Royal Society from 1849 onwards
- The websites of Tasmanian and Interstate Field Naturalists Clubs with links to their publications
- a list of Tasmanian flora and fauna Facebook sites
- Useful Fauna and Flora apps

NEW!

We have recently unsubscribed to the hard copies of **Birds of NZ 'Notornis' publication** which were on the table at General Meetings, but the link to their journals is now available on this LINKS page under the headings **Other Sites**

See: **Birds of NZ - Notornis publication**: https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/society-publications/notornis/

Please note: Like us, they embargo their most recent publications on-line, but all their journals more than a year old can be accessed at this site.

Hand-over of walks-and-talks

After many years as Walks and Talks organiser, I am retiring and very pleased to say, handing over to a very capable Dr. Keith Martin-Smith. He already has a very interesting line-up of talks awaiting you.

I have enjoyed this position – loving the contact with so many passionate individuals (both giving and receiving talks) who wish to share their knowledge.

Thanks to all the committee members who have assisted over the years with suggestions of Speakers and more often excursions. It has been a pleasure being part of the teams!

Thank you to Keith in taking this on.

Amanda Thomson

Obituaries

Arthur Kevin Elliott, Inventor of 'The Elliott Trap.' 16th Dec 1940 – 24th Feb 2023

Kevin, as he was known, grew up in Upwey, Victoria attending the local primary and high schools. Whilst working fulltime, he completed his engineering qualifications at RMIT. In 1965, he met Joyce and later the same year, they married. They were lifelong friends and had four children - three daughters and a son.

About 1966, Kevin designed his well-known trap for capturing live animals, so that the wildlife could be closely studied. They are collapsible which make them easy to carry in the field and come in a range of sizes to suit the capture of a range of wildlife. Since their invention they have been widely copied and adapted. Their design is recognised around the world.

The Elliot trap
Photo: Elliott Scientific (Upwey Victoria)

The traps were initially built by Kevin's father Arthur, but, in the early 1970s, his wife Joyce took over the production, helped by a number of employees. This was done in the workshop at their home in Upwey. In the 1990's TFNC member Don Hird used these traps regularly with our Fauna Survey Group.

Kevin was also a car enthusiast, loved animals and always enjoyed a good talk with everyone. Joyce died in June 2021.

With thanks to Sally Bewsher and the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria for permission to use this article which was included in their April newsletter. Adapted for use in the TFNC Bulletin by Annabel Carle

Bruce Alexander Fuhrer (OAM) 1930–2023

Photographer, Mycologist, Mentor and Friend -

Brue Fuller
Photo: Irene Fuller

Sadly, Bruce is no longer with us, but what a legacy and many wonderful memories he has left. He is the reason Field Naturalist organizations and other community-based conservation groups are so interested in fungi and their conservation today. He had an incredible work ethic, was a great teacher and had a terrific sense of humour. He was very easy to like.

I first met Bruce in 1990. I was working for Forestry Tasmania in Hobart on several Rainforest Conservation projects. I had done my Honours at Tas Uni in fungal ecology under the guidance of Alan Mills and was asked to produce a field guide to illustrate the diversity of fungi found in Tasmanian rainforests. I tried to convince them that I wasn't expert enough to do it on my own, but they insisted. My comeback was that I would do it if I could get a well-known fungi guru and photographer by the name of Bruce Fuhrer involved. They bought it. Now I had to try and convince Bruce. I had never met him, and he didn't have a clue who I was, so I had my work cut out. I tracked down his phone number and put it to him to get involved. Needless to say, he was sceptical …. not of the project, but of my ability to be of any use in getting the job done. In those days we knew very little about Tasmanian fungi, very few had names, and fewer people were studying or taking interest in them (it's a very different situation today).

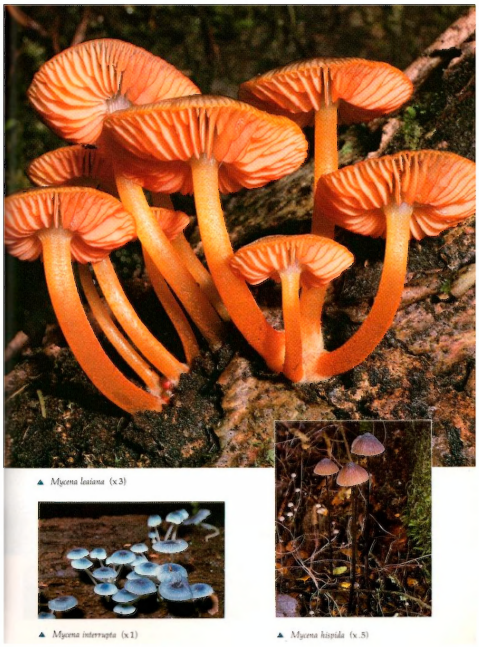
He arrived in Hobart in May prepared for a 3-week lap of Tassie and was pleasantly surprised to see I wasn't the idiot he imagined I was. I was willing to learn, and we got on like a house on fire. What a time we had. Bruce was in his element when he had fungi to photograph, stunning rainforest to do it in, and a forestry employee to vent his dry sense of humour on. He stayed at my place during the trip, and we would inevitably begin each day with him walking out the door saying, 'well we betted get a start before all the bush is gone'. It was a fantastic fungus season, and I suffered badly from information overload. It was also the pivotal experience that convinced me that I could make a career in Mycology. I could not have met a better teacher and mentor. We took the photos, identified the fungi, wrote the text, and curated about 250 voucher collections in about 3 months! *Rainforest Fungi of Tasmania and South-East Australia* was the result. Later Bruce collaborated with Jean Jarman and Gintaras Kantvilas to produce *Mosses and Liverworts of Rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia* and *Lichens of Rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia*. At the time, the books were more than field guides, they showcased Tasmanian fungi, bryophytes and lichens as well as his photography. 'Rainforest fungi' had stunning full-page images and included the first published records of many fungi and several important observations on introduced species—like how *Amanita muscaria* and *Chalciporus piperatus* had become associated with *Nothofagus cunninghamii* in Northern Tasmania. It also featured a number of undescribed Entolomas that have consequently been named by TFN member Genevieve Gates.

The rainforest trilogy
Photo: Richard Robinson

He had his own unique style of photography, which reflected his eye for detail and his incredible knowledge of light. Using long exposures, sometimes a minute or more in the dark environment of our rainforest, and several bursts of fill-in flash he produced stunning photos with ease. I remember we were at Wielangta Forest Reserve; Bruce was taking a photo…it was very low light and it seemed to take forever. After several flashes he rose to his feet, picked up his camera and walked off. 'Hey Bruce' I said, 'did you free the cable release?'. 'Strike!' was his reply, then 'there….no worries it'll be ok'. Although he had walked down the track 10m or so, the result was the stunning photo of *Mycena leaiana* on p. 53. Only Bruce could have pulled that off.

It was an intense introduction to say the least, but we worked well together and became good friends and colleagues. I departed to do my PhD in British Columbia soon after and on my return lived in WA and worked as a fungal ecologist for Parks and Wildlife before returning to Tasmania in 2015. I was lucky enough to spend time with Bruce in two places close to his heart. Tassie for fungi and WA for wildflowers. Bruce came west a few times and I always caught up with him and Irene when I was in Victoria. It was a privilege to spend time with him in the bush. I was lucky enough to visit Bruce and Irene at home just

before Christmas. Although he tired easily, he still remembered the adventures we had in Tassie all those years ago, and others around Victoria.



Mycena leaiana
Photo: Bruce Fuller

I will miss him as will many others. But none will miss him as much as Irene and his family. My sincere condolences go out to them.

Richard Robinson

Bruce Alexander Fuhrer (OAM) 1930–2023

The death of Bruce Fuhrer on 31 March 2023, at the age of 92 was the end of an era.

Bruce was well known to many of us here in Tasmania as a mycologist and for his beautiful fungi photography found most recently in his two books *Field Guide to Australian Fungi* published in 2005 and 2011 respectively, but preceding that, Bruce was co-author in the 1978 book *A Field Guide to the Common Genera of Gilled Fungi in Australia* with Mary Cole and Tony Holland and in 1985 was sole author in *A Field Companion to Australian Fungi.* However, Bruce's skills and talents were much deeper and wider than fungi. In many ways he was the epitome of a field naturalist with a very broad knowledge of so many areas of Australian plants and fungi.

He joined his first field naturalists' club at the age of 17 in Portland, Victoria which is also where he began his lifelong photography career. By 1960 he had moved to Melbourne and had joined both the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria as well as the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club going onto serve on a number in a number of executive committee roles, in particular for their junior members' groups, eventually becoming a life member for both clubs.

He was employed in 1972 by Monash University in a shared position as a photographer for the Maths, Zoology and Botany departments, as they were then called and that is where I met him in 1984 when I began work in Botany. We both worked there until his retirement in 1996.

His job title of 'departmental photographer' was such a misnomer, certainly Bruce was always in demand his photographic skills, non-digital of course, in those days, and entering his dark room on the ground floor was like entering Aladdin's cave. It always had classical music, usually Bach or Mozart softly playing in the background, the photographer's red 'safe light' was on, and it had that chemical darkroom smell. Once inside, Bruce could be found peering out of the gloom blinking into the light. There were so many projects in progress; often he was teaching students how to develop their own films; images were hanging out to dry, and he was surrounded by cameras of all formats, enlargers, boxes of his photographic slides and other paraphernalia, but only that is, if he was there and not out on a field trip!

It was the demand for his field naturalists' skills that was of equal importance to his photographic skills. He mentored many honours and post graduate students. His name may not be on the front cover of the many of the theses and books in which he was involved, for example it was thanks to his field naturalist and photographic skills that Celia Rosser was able to complete the drawings required for *The Mosses of Southern Australia* by Scott and Stone (1976.) Bruce also accompanied Celia on some field trips often to Western Australia to collect fresh species of Banksia in

flower which enabled her over a 25 year period to paint in watercolour all 76 of the named Banksia species which form part of '*The Banksia Project.*' The 1986 book *Ferns and the Allied Plants of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia* by Duncan and Isaacs, credits Bruce for his considerable contribution which certainly included his black and white photography, but more especially for his skills as a field naturalist which were used to locate many of ferns featured in the book.

At the time of his retirement in 1996 from Monash University, digital photography was coming into his own, but he was not daunted, and he went onto to master the new technology, digitising many of his slides as required and going on to become involved in many more projects and publishing books.

Today as I reminisced ,it is thanks to Bruce that I could pull out of our bookshelf ten books which have his name on the cover. By floating seaweeds in containers of water Bruce had mastered a new range of photographic skills to achieve the wonderful algae images used in book *The Seaweeds of Australia,* first published in 1981 and reprinted in 1988.

In 1992 he co-authored with one of our current members Richard Robinson the book *Rainforest fungi of Tasmania and south-east Australia*. In 1995 was co-author with Jean Jarman on the *Mosses and liverworts of rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia.* In 1999 he co-authored with Gintaras Kantvilas the book *Lichens of rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia* and in 2003 was co-author with David Meagher in *A field guide to the mosses and allied plants of southern Australia*.

It was his 'wild flower' books and particularly those in western Australia which were in many ways his real love. First publishing in 1975 *Guide To the Flowers And Plants Of Victoria* by Willis, Fuhrer & Rotherham, then in 1996 I was involved (just with the boring contract bits!) in the book *Wildflowers of Southern Western Australia* which Bruce co-authored with Margaret Corrick and then he went on in 2000 to co-author with her again in the book *Wildflowers of Victoria*.

Over the years Bruce discovered a number of previously undescribed fungal species and described many liverworts. Four species of fungi *Calostoma fuhreri, Hygrocybe fuhreri , Hypoxylon fuhreri and Mycena fuhreri* and two liverworts *Fossombronia fuhreri* and *Bazzania fuhreri* have been named after Bruce.

In 1988 Monash University awarded him an Honorary Master's degree and in 1989 he was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion for his services to photography (Botany) as someone recently described it to me, as 'the Oscar' for a field naturalist and in 2011 he was awarded his OAM.

On meeting Bruce for the first time, he appeared quiet and reserved, but get him into the field and he was such an interesting man with such a dry sense of humour. His wide-ranging field naturalists' knowledge was astounding. As Dr Tom May, Principal Research Scientist (Mycology) at the National Herbarium of Victoria, who was a PhD student at Monash when both Bruce and I worked there, wrote to me this week, 'The thing that I remember most is his enduring curiosity about nature.' He was a master artist with a handheld flash, understanding the light and science needed in both in the field and laboratory to capture his wonderful photographs. What an amazing legacy he has left us to enjoy for the years to come. Tom tells me that just before Christmas, Bruce donated to the National Herbarium of Victoria more than 1000 specimens of fungi along with literally thousands of his photographic slides and Tom wrote 'I think it will be several lifetimes before taxonomists work through all this and name everything, so that is another extraordinary legacy.' Bruce's name and influence will live on.

Our condolences go to his wife Irene, daughter Robyn and family.

Annabel Carle

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